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# Will the Train Meet the Grain?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
Picture Story 274—December 1973



Reflections  
Alongside  
an Empty Track:



All across the country the season's grain harvest is moving to market. A major bottleneck, however, is the critical shortage at country grain elevators of rail cars to move the grain.

When cars aren't available, artificial scarcities of grain result which can drive prices up. That can mean higher prices for many items like bakery products, cereal, and even meat and poultry.

To help ease this problem, the U.S. Department of Agriculture in late September started a monitoring system to pinpoint areas of the country

**ON THE COVER** Corn awaiting harvest near Urbana, Illinois, frames a grain elevator and train cars—both key elements in getting this corn from the field to the feeder (1073K1572-13). A MIDWESTERNER'S EYEGLASSES reflect a sight of

## WILL THE TRAIN MEET THE GRAIN?



that are having problems getting rail cars.

Operators of country grain elevators received questionnaires from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service asking them to list the amount of grain awaiting shipment, grain on hand in the elevator—and on the ground, if any; and anticipated receipts and shipments within the next two weeks. Reports by the warehousemen are voluntary and are submitted weekly only when there's a car shortage.

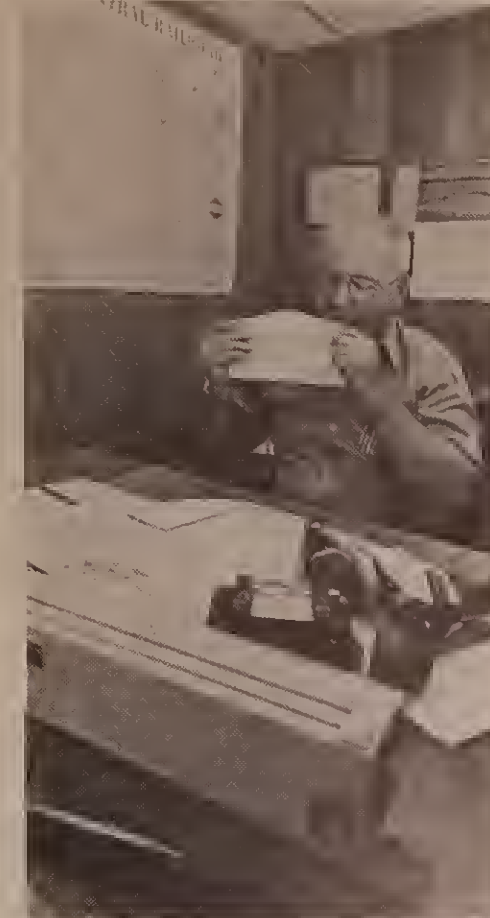
USDA then feeds the information into a computer that produces geo-

graphic lists. They spell out just what areas need more cars and how severe the shortages are.

The lists are then passed on for further action to agencies that have some control over the situation, such as the Interstate Commerce Commission, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the Association of American Railroads.

Hopefully, this attempt at national coordination will mean more supplies of grain to feeders and processors.

(1073K1579-27). The first crucial stop for nearly all grain is at a country elevator where it is stored awaiting shipment to various users (1073K1572-13).

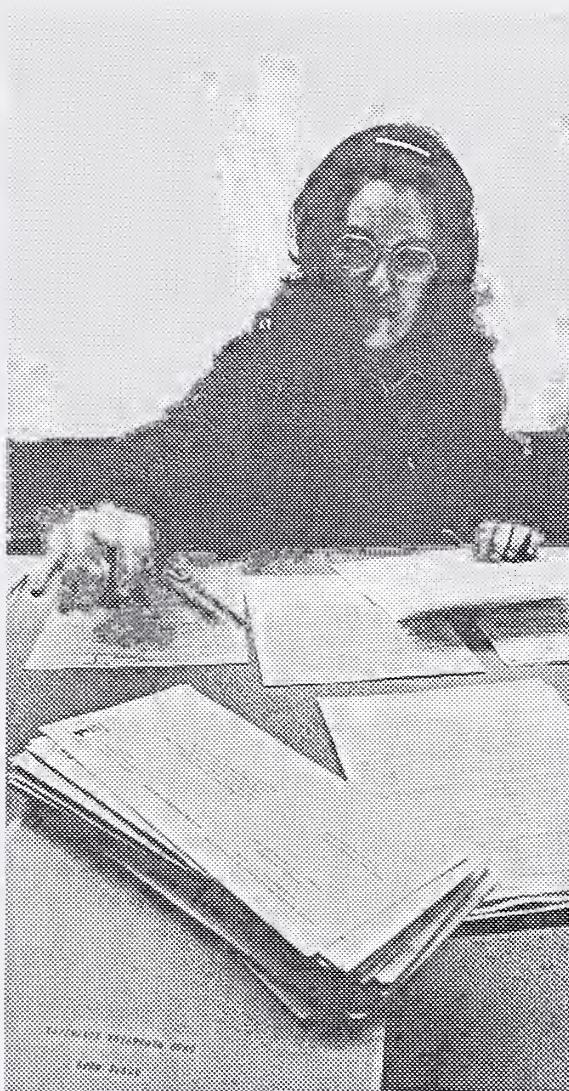
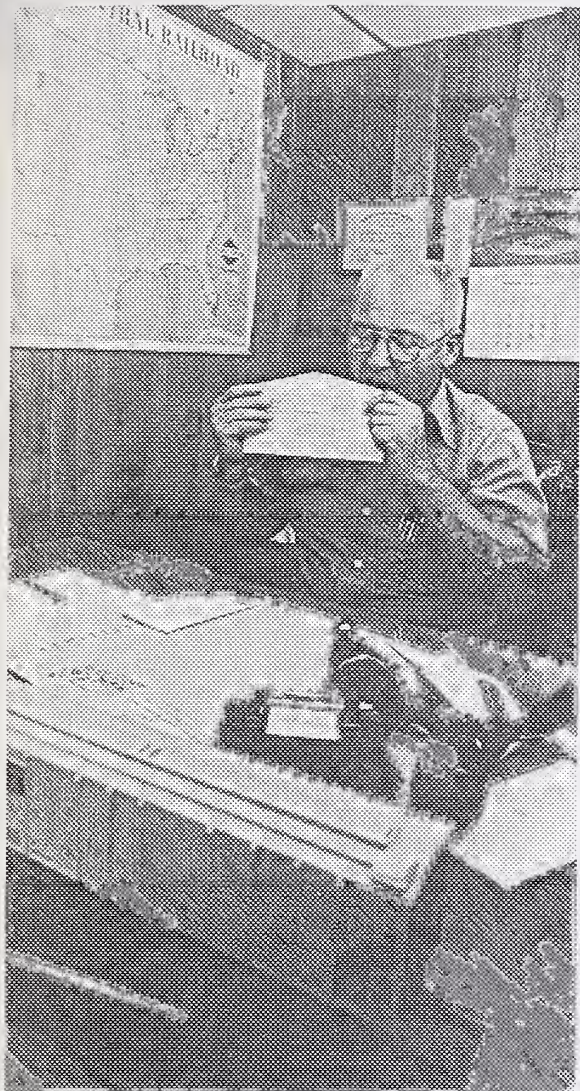


Rail Car  
Monitoring  
Seeks an  
Answer

After experiencing trouble getting rail cars, a country elevator operator sends his weekly questionnaire (1073K1576-27) before mailing it to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. There it, and scores of others from across the country, is opened (1073K1607-5) and computer-processed into lists (1073K1607-27) that pinpoint general areas of the country where cars are scarce. Hopefully this information can help get the rail cars rolling (1073K1563-19) toward where they're most needed when they're most needed.

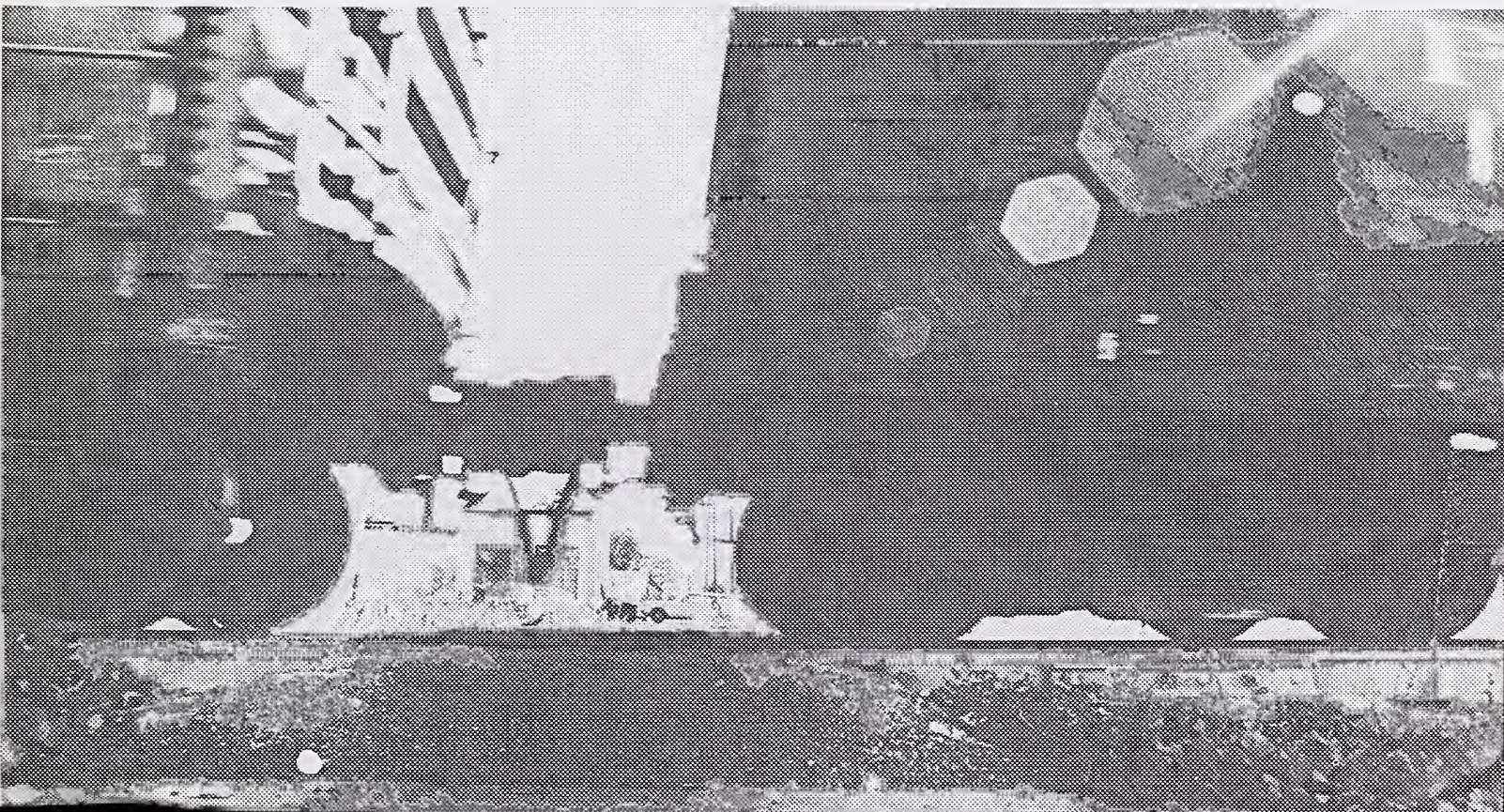
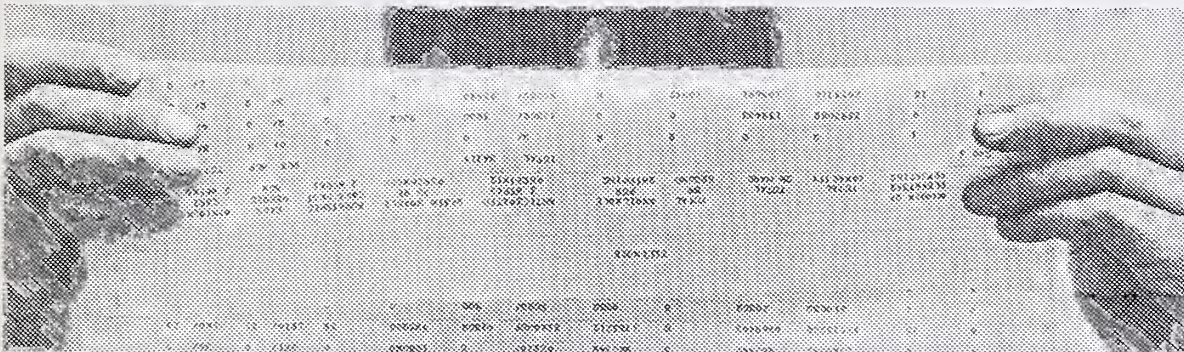






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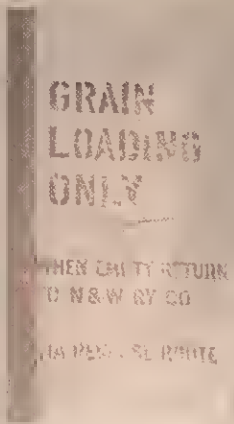




# Truck to Train Grain Transfer Keeps Country Elevators Busy



USDA Photographs by David F. Warren



NEWLY-HARVESTED GRAIN trucked from the field spills into a conveyor at an Illinois country elevator (1073K1581-33). WORKMAN closes the lids of a huge hopper car as each hopper is filled with grain from an elevator. A cable and pulley system moves grain along under the spout (1073K1581-33). MARKINGS on hopper car specify use and owner (1073K1569-27). A TRAIN car with part of this season's grain crop moves past a freshly emptied corn field near Homer, Illinois (1073K1578-5). NOTE TO EDITOR: This is a Picture Story.

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